

Message Text

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ORIGIN SAB-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 128612

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:PFOR, PN

SUBJECT:STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFINGS

1. THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1,
NOON BRIEFING:

MR. TRATTNER: I HAVE ONE OTHER ANNOUNCEMENT. THE PRESENT
ROUND OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH BEGAN
ON MAY 9, RECESSED AFTER TUESDAY'S MEETING -- THAT'S
YESTERDAY -- SO THAT THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS MAY RETURN
TO PANAMA FOR CONSULTATION WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT. THE
U.S. NEGOTIATORS WILL BE CONSULTING WITHIN THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE PARTIES HAVE
AGREED TO CONTINUE THE ROUND IN PANAMA ON THE WEEKEND
AFTER NEXT -- THAT'S THE END OF NEXT WEEK. THE TECHNICAL
TEAMS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO MEET HERE TO
WORK ON DETAILS RELATED TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q. WHEN IS THE RESUMPTION, JOHN, PLEASE? A. WEEKEND
AFTER NEXT.

Q. LIKE THE SIXTH OF JUNE? A. NO. A WEEK FROM THIS
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WEEKEND.

Q. THE THIRTEENTH? A. THE END OF NEXT WEEK.

Q. IS THAT CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
INCLUDING CONGRESS? A. WELL, I THINK, CONSULTATIONS
WITHIN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAVE ALWAYS INCLUDED WITH

CONGRESS.

Q. HAVE THEY BEGUN TO DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR A TREATY?

A. GEORGE, I CAN'T GO BEYOND WHAT WE'VE SAID UP TO NOW AND WHAT I'VE SAID TODAY.

Q. JOHN, WHAT PROMPTED THE RECESS BESIDES THE NEED TO CONSULT THEIR GOVERNMENTS? A. WELL, IT'S NOT AT ALL UNUSUAL, JUAN, IN THE COURSE OF LONG AND COMPLEX NEGOTIATIONS FOR NEGOTIATORS TO GO BACK TO THEIR PRINCIPALS, BACK TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS FOR CONSULTATION, FOR EXAMPLE, TO GET CLEARER DEFINITIONS OF POINTS THAT HAVE COME UP IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT AREN'T FULLY COVERED IN THEIR ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS. SO THERE'S NOTHING UNUSUAL OR PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN THIS. THE TALKS CONTINUE TO BE OPEN, CORDIAL AND PRODUCTIVE.

Q. DOES THIS REPRESENT A BREAKTHROUGH? JUST FOR THE SAKE OF STATISTICS, THE MEETING IN PANAMA, IS IT A NEW ROUND OR IS IT THE SAME ROUND THAT BEGAN ON MAY 9TH?

A. I SAID THE ROUND WILL CONTINUE -- THAT'S THE ROUND THAT BEGAN MAY 9TH.

Q. WHY PANAMA? WHY WAS IT MOVED TO PANAMA? A. WELL, I DON'T KNOW THE PRECISE REASON, JUAN. I THINK THEY HAVE BEEN IN PANAMA BEFORE, AND THERE'S NO REASON WHY THEY CAN'T BE IN PANAMA AGAIN.

Q. JOHN, WOULD YOU SAY THEY HAD A FRAMEWORK FOR AN UNCLASSIFIED

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AGREEMENT? A. I WOULDN'T WANT TO CHARACTERIZE IT BEYOND WHAT WE'VE SAID SO FAR.

Q. I WAS TAKING OFF ON YOUR WORD "OPEN". SINCE THEY WERE SO OPEN, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE OPEN WITH US. I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE OPEN. A. CANDID.

Q. CANDID. AH; THEY SPEAK TO EACH OTHER, FRANKLY. JOHN, IS THIS EXPECTED TO BE THE LAST ROUND? A. I HAVE NO WAY TO PREDICT THAT FOR YOU, ROY.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHEN IT WILL END, THE CONTINUATION OF THIS ROUND? A. NO.

Q. ARE THERE ANY STICKY POINTS AT THIS POINT, OR HAVE THEY GOT THE MAIN ISSUES PRETTY WELL RESOLVED? A. I THINK I'VE JUST SAID, IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION, THAT

I CAN'T GO BEYOND WHAT WE'VE SAID ABOUT IT UP TILL NOW.

Q. WELL, I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU AT THAT POINT WHY YOU CAN'T. A. WELL, BECAUSE WHEN NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDER WAY, WE RARELY PROVIDE YOU WITH MUCH DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING, WHERE THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY MAY BE GOING.

2. NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WERE ASKED AT THE BRIEFING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1.

3. THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT THE NOON BRIEFING OF THURSDAY, JUNE 2:

Q. JOHN, COULD YOU COMMENT OR CONFIRM ON THAT REPORT THAT PANAMA AND THE U.S. HAVE AGREED ON A POST-TREATY AGREEMENT? A. NOT REALLY, NO, JUAN. I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON THAT. GOOD PROGRESS HAS BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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MADE ON THE ROUND THAT RECESSED, I THINK, DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, AND WE, OF COURSE, HOPE FOR FURTHER PROGRESS WHEN IT RECONVENES IN ABOUT NINE OR TEN DAYS. I WOULD POINT OUT THAT THERE ARE STILL DIFFICULT PROBLEMS REMAINING TO BE WORKED OUT.

4. NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WERE ASKED AT THE BRIEFING OF THURSDAY, JUNE 2.

CHRISTOPHER

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